



Foodie Facts

During the Age of Sail (usually dated as 1571–1862) it was assumed that on any given trip 50 percent of the sailors would die of scurvy - a disease due to a lack of vitamin C.

Captain James Cook provisioned his ship for a two year journey, and expected to supplement these rations with indigenous fare. Adequate fresh water and anti-scorbutics* to ward away scurvy played critical roles in his success to (unusually) maintain the health of his crew.

What kinds of food and drink were consumed on Cook's ships?

“In his journal for July 1772, Cook gives the following account of the provisions placed aboard the *Resolution* and *Adventure*...

Biscuit, flour, salt beef, salt pork, beer, wine, spirit [distilled alcohol], pease [dried peas], wheat, oatmeal, butter, cheese [hard], sugar, oyle olive [olive oil], vinegar, suet, raisins, salt, malt, sour kroust [sauerkroust], salted cabbage, portable broth [dessicated soup], saloop, mustard, mermalade [marmalade] of carrots, water...”

Where live animals were taken on board?

“Yes. “...cows, sheep, pigs, chickens...” The live-stock was for leaving on desert islands needful of such provender and the poultry was to provide eggs during the voyage.”

Could the crew bring their own food on board?

“Yes. Generally, the higher the rank, the more “personal” food was packed. This was a matter of economy (wealthy people could afford to supply their own consumables) and space as officer's quarters were roomier than regular crew.

Individuals, particularly the officers, supplemented their needs with personal provisioning; this might be Madeira [a sweet wine] brought on board for their own use. In the case of the crew...it was usually what serendipity

delivered: flying fish or tired albatross.”



*A medicine that prevents or cures scurvy. **Extracts from *Sailors & Sauerkraut: Excerpts from the Journals of Captain Cook's Expeditions All Pertaining to Food With Recipes to Match*. Barbara Burkhardt, Barrie Andugs McLean & Doris Kochanek; Grey's Publishing; Sidney BC, 1978.**